

critical digest



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This Week in NYC

Off Broadway theatre and coffee house owners were involved in a series of legal battles. Many were brought into Manhattan Arrest Court for violations of operating as cabarets without licenses. A bill to create a special licensing department for cafe-theatres is under consideration by the NY City Council. An unnamed Off Broadway theatre owner revealed through his lawyer that he has testified before the NY State Investigation Commission that he was forced to give weekly bribes to members of the police, fire and building departments. The report will be made public later this year.

Plays

Shows that closed include--
The Music Man after 1376 performances, and Under the Yum Yum Tree ... Tenderloin closes Apr 17 after 217 performances and will start tour May 19 in Las Vegas... A Far Country skilled Apr 11 performance due to sudden illness of Steven Hill, director Alfred Ryder portrayed Dr Freud at matinee, with Hill returning for evening performance... Carte Blanche authors Dean Fuller and George Goodman have resigned in policy disagreement and may be replaced by Coleman Jacoby and Arnie Rosen... The Nose of Jerry Pepper new comedy by Arnold Schulman to be presented by Jule Styne-Roger Stevens instead of Kermit Bloomgarden... Shalom a new musical on modern Israel to be presented Dec 18 with Robert Weede and Molly Picon, book by Don Appell, music and lyrics by Jerry Herman, directed by Albert Marre, presented by Gerald Oestreicher.

Broadway Business

Variety business for the holiday week shows all profited. Sellouts reported by Camelot, Mary Mary, Sound of Music, Wildcat, May and Nichols. Nine shows on twofers.

NYC Calendar

The Seven At Dawn-Actors Playhouse (100-7th Av S) 4/17. Siegal-Simon-Albert French Restaurant present new play by Louis Lippa based on a short story by Leonid Andreyev. Directed by Joseph Beruh with Donald Gantry, Ruth Kaner, Alan Ansara.

Gallows Humor- Gramercy Arts (138 E 27) 4/18. Theatre 1961 presents new play by Jack Richardson, directed by George Sherman with Gerald Hiken, Julie Bovasso, Vincent Gardenia.

Smiling the Boy Fell Dead-Cherry Lane (38 Commerce) 4/19. Ted Mann-George Kogel present new musical with book by Ira Wallach, music by David Baker, lyrics by Sheldon Harnick, Gerald Freedman replaced Word Baker as director. With Claiborne Cary, Phil Leeds, Daniel Meehan. Postponed from 4/11.

Evenings with Chekhov-Key (4 St Marks Place) 4/20. Greg Reardon presents three one act Chekhov plays--The Anniversary, On the High Road, The Wedding. Directed by Amnon Kabatchnik with Sorrell Booke.

Special Events

Way Out at the York to be presented Apr 17 only at York. It will consist of ten segments of plays and films directed by Roberts Blossoms, short plays by Ursule Molinaro, presented by Theatre 1961... Young Abe Lincoln to be presented for ten special matinee performances at O'Neill starting Apr 25.

Players

William Myers replaced Morris Carnovsky, Rhinoceros... Joan Fagan replaced Kip Hamilton, Donnybrook!... Jeffrey Lynn and George Voskevoc to join A Call on Kuprin due May 25... Frederic March to star in Gideon by Paddy Chayefsky due Nov 9... Jason Robards, Jr received \$100 fine in NY Special Sessions Court for drunken and reckless driving.

Off Broadway

Shows that closed include--
The Magnificent Hugo after 6 performances, Cry of the Raindrop after 40, and Double Entry after 56... "Bilbo Song" from Weill & Brecht's 1930 Happy End added to Three Penny Opera in the wake of several hit recordings... The Blacks by Jean Genet to be presented May 4 at St Marks directed by Gene Frankel with an all negro cast... American Savoyards, Dorothy Raedler director, to present spring season at Greenwich Mews. Their usual showshop, Jan Hus, still has King of the Dark Chamber. Season opens Apr 27... Equity Library Theatre to open next season in 286 seat Masters Theatre, Riverside & 103rd St.

Legal Dept

NY City Center and Phoenix Theatre will be exempt from 5% city admission tax starting Jul 1 under bill signed by Gov Rockefeller.

Theatre TV Notes

WNTA (NY) Play of the Week Apr 17 is The Wingless Victory by Maxwell Anderson with Eartha Kitt, Hugh O'Brian... Show Girl, pay TV presentation, repeated for second week in Toronto suburb test.

Theatre Film Notes

Camelot film rights sold for \$2 million plus percentages to Warner Bros.

Shakespeare

NY Shakespeare Festival will open Jul 5 with A Midsummer Night's Dream in temporary outdoor theatre next to its new amphitheatre which will not be completed in time.

Play Diary

Next Week: Twin Bill-1 Sher Sq-4/24. Happy as Larry-Martiniique 4/25. South Pacific-City Center 4/26... Yeoman of the Guards-Green Mews 4/27

DIGESTS OF CURRENT NYC THEATRE REVIEWS

Show Boat- City Center 4/12-4/23. 7 pros-Unanimous- filed on NY City Center Light Opera Company two week revival of Kern-Hammerstein classic, staged by Dania Krupska with Joe E Brown, Jo Sullivan, Robert Rounseville, Anita Darin. Five of seven were raves with only minor criticism by some of the choreography staged by Arthur Partington and specific renditions of certain songs. Funke, Times, rated revival a pleasure with the wonderful score entrusted to first class performers and singers, and staged with gaiety and vigor. Kupferberg, Herald Tribune, enjoyed everything but dances which failed to capture the mood and Darin's singing of "Bill.", otherwise it is the fullest, richest, freshest musical in town. Watt, News, applauded all elements, except for two songs cut out of show- "In Dahomey" and "I Still Suits Me." Coleman, Mirror, marked musical director Julius Rudel as the hero of the evening, and he noted that Krupska's direction was on the obvious side. Mirror man joined majority he reminded that show at \$3.95 top was a bargain. Herridge, Post, was glad to see the 1927 show again with not a number that isn't fun to hear again, done by an excellent cast of singers. McClain, Journal American, thought this fifth version he viewed of the musical was one of the best done with an excellent orchestra and a superb group of performers. Aston, World Telegram & Sun, applauded score which swayed and boomed as captivately as ever with the orchestra and cast in top form.

The Decameron- East 74 St (334 E 74) 4/12. 3 pro- Times, News, Post- and 3 con- Herald Tribune, Journal American, World Telegram & Sun- filed on new musical version of stories by Boccaccio, presented by Selma Tamber-William Tarr, book and lyrics by Yvonne Tarr, music by Edward Earle, directed by Burry Frederick, with Jan Miner, Louis Edmonds, Betty McNamara, Robert Simpson. Mild approval for stylish rendition of better than average Off Broadway musical differed from negative views of attractive cast weighed down by boring book and lyrics. Pro side headed by Taubman, Times, who enjoyed moments of grace, imagination and humor, especially in final tale of the nightingale. Other sketches he admitted her dim and pedestrian. Davis, News, rated it a pleasant, beguiling show with a sprightly score, he also enjoying nightingale sketch best. Watts, Post, thought it tuneful and disarmingly agreeable without being brilliant, a freshly modest romantic attractiveness that is appealing. Dissenter Kerr, Herald Tribune, felt evening was light to the point of insubstantiality and often arch, a concert evening with O'Connor, Journal American, labeled it a bore, not comic or opera; though he did single out Jan Miner as a coming Bea Lillie. Saffron, WTS, could not understand how such a wonderful classic idea could be weighed down with leaden jocosties, the stage seldom sparks into sustained gaiety.

The Magnificent Hugo-Comedy (52 E 78) 4/7-4/9. 6 con- Times, Herald Tribune, Mirror, Post, Journal American, World Telegram & Sun- filed on new comedy by Walter Hasenclever, adapted from German by Louis Bardoly, presented by Cornelius Productions-Arthur Penn, staged by Sherwood Arthur with Michael Shillo and Elizabeth Hubbard. Play and/or translation blamed by most for failure. Production closed after three performances. Esterow, Times, billed it as more tiresome than titillating, despite some good acting. Salmaggi, Herald Tribune, found it hopelessly hackneyed. Coleman, Mirror, panned it as dreary, amateurish bore. Herridge, Post, thought it an unsubstantial bit of fluff with uneven acting. McClain, Journal American, feared it was a debacle, a sheer calamity for players and patrons.

Moby Dick- Madison Ave Playhouse (31st & Mad) 4/10. 2 pro- Mirror, Journal American- and 4 con- Times, Herald Tribune, Post, World Telegram & Sun- filed on one man reading by and with Philip Hanson of Herman Melville novel, presented by John Lotas. Pro voters enjoyed dramatic rendition of tale by professional, while con thought Hanson failed in his objective. Coleman, Mirror, complimented the dedicated professional for putting his best foot forward to show how fascinating the Melville story is. A talented actor, but no Gielgud or Holbrook, Mirror aisle-sitter admitted. O'Connor, Journal American, filed a rave for the amazing feat of endurance, acting and memory, not a reading, but a performance of protean acting, a whale of a one man show. But negative viewer Calta, Times, was bored by what was no more than an adequate stage reading. Kupferberg, Herald Tribune, found most of first half vivid and human, but felt that much of it does not lend itself to dramatic treatment. Herridge, Post, thought program notable only for actor's boldness in which the soaring legend is reduced to a bedtime story for schoolboys. Saffron, WTS, doubted if all the best actors of the British and US stage combined could put Melville story over onstage.

Hobo- Gate (162-2nd Av) 4/10. 2 pro- Journal American, World Telegram & Sun- and 4 con- Times, Herald Tribune, News, Post- filed on new musical with book, lyrics and music by John Dooley, staged by Rinaldo Capillupo, presented by George E Burns with Elmarie Wendell, Ronald Holgate and Hal Waters. Pro side enjoyed lively take-off of Bowery bums, while con side panned material harshly. McClain, Journal American, enjoyed inventive, very touching show which was exactly right for Off Broadway, good voices and good fun. Aston, WTS, liked show that was alive and kicking by author with a nimble mind and workable music. Negative voter Taubman, Times, suggested show was strictly parlor entertainment for the author's friends. Kerr, Herald Tribune, panned show which will probably win awards easily for having longest song title, the actress with the most blue shadow and the college graduate less likely to succeed. Davis, News, summed it as a bum musical. Watts, Post, agreed it was for a social gathering of the author's friends, who were at the opening night and did enjoy it.

The Painted Days- Theatre Marquee (110 E 59) 4/6. 2 pro- Journal American, Post- and 5 con- Times, Herald Tribune, News, Mirror, World Telegram & Sun- filed on new play by John Byrne, presented by Elliot Martin, directed by Sonia Moore with Irene Moore, Bill Fletcher, Christopher Cary. Difference of opinion on modern Irish tale of a blind girl was on value of script, most agreeing acting and production was fine. Pro side headed by rave notice from McClain, Journal American, for moving play, persuasive and well written, outstandingly directed, well mounted, and a study in performance. Watts, Post, okayed intelligently written, moderately interesting story with the leading role gracefully and attractively played by Moore. Majority view headed by Taubman, Times, who doubted if author reached below the surface of his characters. Crist, Herald Tribune, panned it as a trite tale with nine different Irish accents onstage. Davis, News, thought it a good production of a sincere but unexciting play with a Class B movie plot. Coleman, Mirror, listed it as an earnest, cliche ridden drama with good actors. Aston, WTS, could not get interested in the characters and got confused by the story.

The Grass Harp- Equity Library Theatre 4/11. Aston, WTS, did not think ELT cast directed by Thomas Burrows had captured the perfect ensemble blending of talents required for this difficult Truman Capote script. Director called for so much tranquility that voices trailed off, movements seemed hesitant and the little climaxes threatened to be awkward.



GREEN
ROOM
DEPARTMENT

'ADVISE' & REVISE... Diverse views expressed by authors, producers, critics on whether Advise and Consent should, needs and/or will undergo any revisions before its national tour in Sept. Co-producer Robert Fryer announced that the political drama may have some revisions made to emphasize that its view-point was not anti-liberal. Novelist Allen Drury stated that revisions would be minor and would bear no relation to the hysterical outcries of phony professional liberals. Adaptor Loring Mandel disagreed that any changes would be necessary. He told Aston, World Telegram & Sun, that everyone concerned agreed on the opening night version. Ticket buyers should be offered what has been described to them, playwright believes... Watts, Post, noted that the producers spoke of making changes as soon as Sen Goldwater praised show, Drury's angry denunciation gives rise to the suspicion that he is under the delusion of being John O'Hara, Post man added.

OFF BWAY VIEWS... The Premise recommended by Slocum, Mirror. Four performers are truly funny and their comments historically accurate... Living Theatre and Circle in the Square go steadily ahead doing consistently interesting and intelligent work amid the chaos that could well wreck Off Broadway as a constructive force in the US theatre, applauds Watts, Post.

BROADWAY DOOMSDAY... Two directors and a critic expressed dim views of Broadway present and future in interviews. Elia Kazan labeled the whole Broadway setup impossible artistically and economically. New managing director of Lincoln Center Repertory Company told Gelb, Times, that except for staging some plays at Lincoln Center, where up to six months will be allowed for rehearsal, he will never do any more plays on Broadway... Tyrone Guthrie charged that Broadway is a murderous jungle with an oversupply of actors and theatres, he told a Univ of Minn lecture, Variety reports... Kenneth Tynan, London Observer, predicted that in time Broadway would have only a dozen theatres and a musical in each one, he told Herald Tribune Books Editor.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS... Average Broadway producer is a shoemaker who knows he is a shoemaker and thus lacking background and knowledge of theatre allows a half dozen playbrokers to control the market, blames Davis, News... Richard Burton, Camelot, was utterly bored with the proceeding's night Slocum, Mirror, covered hit. His dead pan delivery and monotonous reduction of words to monosyllables made "Arthur" appear rather a method, mummbling cretin... Careful search might uncover a rebel or two rash enough to question Columbia University Forum's belief that Eric Bentley is "considered the best theatre critic in this and many countries," bets Watts, Post.

DRAMA MAIL BOX... Courtesy of Evening with Nichols and May, producer and box-office man at Golden related by Herald Tribune reader. After being informed at the box-office that no tickets were available for that night, the treasurer took his name and address. Two days later the patron received a note from producer Alex Cohen apologizing for the lack of tickets, together with suggestions for buying them for a future date.



PROS & CONS BY TMK

A Far Country is an excellent documentary drama, brilliantly played. The vivid portraits developed by the careful, talented cast are among the finest work of the season. The subject matter is surprisingly fresh, despite the fact that the field has been thoroughly explored. Leave it to the medical experts if the facts as presented are accurate, the result is interesting, stimulating theatre.

* * *

Hobo is a dull musical attempt at being beat and satirical. Except for the fine bass-baritone of Ronald Holgate there is little to recommend in this very short musical. Staging of book and dance numbers seems straight out of high school yearbook poses, while the songs all sound exactly the same. The sad attempts at being topical and/or clever fail and may bring about that much needed national law banning all "New Frontier" gags for the duration. Show does contain an historic first--it is probably first that has a vital scene played co-ed in the Ladies Room.

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Broadway took a verbal beating this week from two famed directors and an international critic. Charges amounted to fact that artistic side of Broadway is buried under the economic demands. The personal solutions of the two directors are signs that Broadway producers had better find a solution fast or its best people will continue to leave. This is further proof that theatre will not die, but it very well might move away from Broadway.

* * *

It is no secret that many Off Broadway theatre owners, just like hundreds of other owners of NYC businesses, must bribe many officials to stay open. Building codes were written many years ago and almost anything can be a violation. It is trite but true, but it does take two to bribe. Both Off Broadway theatre owner and the city official are wrong in gambling with the safety of theatre patrons. The first step toward a sensible solution is a revision of the building codes to conform to modern electrical and safety equipment. Then when a brave Off Broadway landlord refuses to indulge in the time honored practices he will be in the right. Until then certain playshops might be wise to invest in some of that 25c Do-It-Yourself- safety insurance machines.

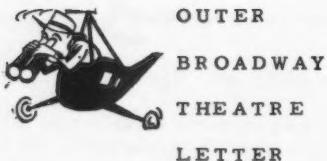
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Trend Spotters Dept: Strip teases are being reintroduced to NY via Off Broadway. Ladies Night in the Turkish Bath sole excuse is the exotic dancer straight from NY's Casbah, while Hobo features a sedate strip by a society matron. Bets are even that the forthcoming musical about nudist camps, entitled They're Off (no kidding) will also have the urge to shed.

* * *

Until it becomes common practice to label revised productions as such, in both program, advertising and publicity, it does seem grossly unfair to change the script of Broadway shows. Most patrons understand that they are not seeing the original cast when they attend a NY show late in its run, but they certainly think they are seeing the original play.

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College Theatre

The Possessed a new adaptation of Dostoevski's novel by Robert Magidoff to be presented Apr 13-18 at Tulane University, New Orleans... Dr Zhivago a staged reading of Pasternak's novel adapted by Leon Katz to be presented Apr 19-23 at Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart, Purchase, NY... Epitaph for George Dillon with recent NY Off Broadway cast headed by James Patterson was presented for six performances at Chicago University Theatre by Chicago ANTA... Pro & Con 113th annual Hasty Pudding Club, Harvard Univ, revue included one special performance at Radio City Music Hall workshops during Easter week tour as token payment for services of Jean Ketteli who helped stage the dances.

Kirk Denmark, Beloit, Wis, College, told Herridge, Post, that while it is true that too many universities are still putting on warmed over Broadway, the number that are not is even more impressive. During each four year period Beloit students are presented wide range of classic and modern drama.

Spring Repertory

A View from the Bridge with Shelley Winters, staged by Milton Katselas opens Apr 17 at Paper Mill Playhouse, Millburn, NJ. Next is Destry Rides Again with Yvonne de Carlo... Lullaby with Peggy Cass returned to Drury Lane, Chicago... Goodbye My Fancy with Margaret Truman current at Phoenix... Under the Yum Yum Tree NY Production with Sandra Church opens Apr 18 at Coconut Grove, Fla.

New Theatres

Tyrone Guthrie Theatre, Minneapolis, has postponed its opening date from summer 1962 to May 14, 1963. Reasons include predicted likelihood of construction delays and desire of Guthrie to start first season with six plays in repertory for full 26 weeks. Half of the \$2 million is raised for 1400 seat theatre, construction to start this summer.

Summer Playhouses

Memorial Hall, Dayton, Ohio to present season of stock directed by James Alex... Edgewater Beach Hotel, Chicago, to present 11 week season of packages and local productions, Henry Guettel, managing producer... O'Keefe Centre, Toronto, will present summer season of musicals, booked by Alex Cohen

New play series of Pioneer Playhouse, Danville, Ky, opens Jun 26. First three new scripts selected include--Oh Gentle Trout by Perry Steiglitz, The Aftermath by John Grilley, and Trip No Further by Monroe Stern. Playwrights will be in residence during production.

Packages added to summer routes include--Pajama Game with Julia Meade and Venus at Large with Jan Sterling.

Shakespeare

Twelfth Night to be presented Apr 24-26 by Arnold Moss' company, directed by Philip Burton at Library of Congress, Washington, D.C... A Midsummer Night's Dream to be directed by B Iden Payne, Univ of Texas, at Ashland Oregon Festival.

Road Shows

Eileen Kennally replaced Helena Carroll, The Hostage... A Pride of Lions adaptation of Hemingway stories by A E Hotchner to make long college tour prior to Broadway try.

Special Events

Photographic exhibit of new Western Germany municipal theatres will open May 6 at Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D. C.

Award Dept

Paul Baker, Dallas Theatre Center and Baylor Univ, Waco, Texas, won \$1000 award and bronze medallion Rodgers and Hammerstein first annual prize to person "who contributed most to the theatre in the Southwest in 1960."

Charles Coburn received an honorary award at Southeastern Theatre Conference meeting, Miami. Alexander Kirkland addressed convention on "The Group Theatre."

"Stanley Award" of \$500 and three performances to be given at Wagner College, Staten Island, NY Jul 21-23 of best new play that has never been professionally produced.

London

The Square a new play by Marguerite Duran, author of film "Hiroshima Mon Amour" presented at Little Theatre, Bromley, highly recommended by most reviewers... Derwent Awards of \$140 for Best Supporting Performances of Season won by Peter Woodthorpe, The Caretaker, and Rachael Roberts Platanov.

Hamlet production at Royal Shakespeare with Ian Bannen, directed by Peter Wood, vetoed by critics for bad casting and for shifting of famed speeches.

Paris

French and foreign playwrights termed "classical" by Ministry of Culture that can be presented at lower tax rates by theatres include--O'Neill, Molnar, Camus, Lora, Gorki, Strindberg.

US Repertory

Theatre Guild American Repertory Company cast illness of Helen Hayes and June Havoc caused cancellation of matinee of The Skin of Our Teeth in Tel Aviv. Next stop was Ankara, Turkey.

Latin America

The Fantasticks opened in Mexico City... Musical Comedy Festival to be presented Jul 17-Aug 12 by Barry Yellin in Univ of Puerto Rico 200 seat theatre. Four Broadway hits to be picked by patrons and to be presented by NY casts.

Tryout Calendar

Donnybrook! - Shubert, Philadelphia 4/17.

Current Road Tours

Becket- Riveria, Detroit 4/17

The Hostage- Biltmore, Los Angeles 4/11

Gypsy- Music Hall, Cleveland 4/17



"CD" digests all theatre material in the 2100 pages of 7 NY daily papers of the preceding week." CD" subscribers are invited to inquire further for more specific data on current reviews, back reviews and out-of-town tryout reviews via mail, phone or drop by for coffee and facts when in NYC.

